

Illinois History: A Magazine for Young People
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Whittington, Illinois

Megan Cripps

Teacher: David Goss

Ewing-Northern Elementary School, Ewing

Changes can come to a small community quickly, even dramatically. Whittington, Illinois, in Franklin County, is an example of such changes. Until 1894 it was mostly a farming area which rural churches and one-room schools characterized.

Early settlers were attracted to the Whittington area because of plentiful game and abundant water. Jacob Winemiller, the first person to own land in Whittington, came in 1848. In his memoir he wrote of homing pigeons, groves of oak trees, and farmers who walked their livestock to market, often all the way to St. Louis. Suddenly this tranquility changed. The railroad gave birth to Whittington, like many of the neighboring communities. In 1894 the Chicago and Eastern Illinois (C&EI) railroad came through and with it came dramatic changes.

Whittington suddenly became an important cattle loading point and the center of a timber area producing railroad pilings and crossties. Businesses began to pop up. Some of the first businesses were a hotel, a variety of stores, sawmill, barbershop, blacksmith shop, and a funeral home. A livery stable provided transportation for students to nearby Ewing College. The students traveled the first cement road in southern Illinois. Soon a bank developed and was one of only three in the county to survive the Great Depression. Today it still prospers; in fact, it now has branches at Benton and Sesser.

Another dramatic change came in 1919 when a steam engine waited by the lumberyard. The engine blew a spark on the dry wooden roof. At first the flame was small, but when the train backed up and squirted steam on it, the fire consumed the entire

roof. It quickly spread. Most of the business district east of the railroad burned to the ground. The lumberyard was later rebuilt, but most businesses were not.

Once again improvement promised new life. This occurred when state highway 37 came through. Route 37 barely touched the outer edge of the Whittington community, but it stimulated new businesses like gas stations and restaurants. Citizens were certain that the paved road would bring new life and growth. Actually all it did was make it easier for locals to shop in bigger communities. Further, bus service soon replaced the passenger trains. Trucks make freight hauling more convenient than that of the railroad and its once busy depot. Actually only one business besides the bank and funeral home survived, and it was actually on the highway and not in the center of town. Burton's Cafe, famous for its white pie, continues after 57 years.

If you look at Whittington today you see pleasant, mostly small homes surrounded by huge farm fields. These homes have electricity, indoor plumbing, and running water; luxuries that seem so normal today were not always around. Until the early 1960s the people of Whittington depended on well water and cisterns. In many summers these cisterns and wells dried up. Water was scarce. In the early Sixties the federal government got involved. They provided the funding to dam the Big Muddy River, forming nearby Rend Lake. This provided running water to many of the homes of Whittington and other communities. Power plants farther south provided electricity.

In addition to water, Rend Lake provides recreational and tourist businesses. It also brings business for restaurants and spread the fame of Burton's white pie. On the other hand, Rend Lake took nearly half the land and population that supported the consolidated elementary school. In 1974 it closed and merged with nearby Ewing Northern Grade School.

Still, changes occur. Rend Lake supplies water. A modern system provides sanitation. Nearby Rend Lake College and Big Muddy Prison bring employment opportunities. The Rend Lake Artisan Shop causes people to pull off Interstate 57 and others stay to enjoy the twenty-seven-hole-golf course.

I love my community, Whittington, Illinois. Its quiet neighborliness, sense of security, and peaceful demeanor make it a special place to grow up. Whittington has a rich history. It is different from the surrounding communities, yet very much like them. Changes came from outside factors and people had to adjust. Now its future is tied to new opportunities including the promise of additional recreational projects connected to the lake. [From Ewing-Northern 1993 Eighth Grade Class, *A History of Whittington, Illinois*; David Goss interview of Elizabeth Britton, Nov. 10, 1992; David Goss interview of Laverne and Harold Winemiller, Apr. 16, 1993; David Goss interview of Lee Herbert and Billie Winemiller, July 22, 1992; Joseph Jurich, *This is Franklin County*; Billie Winemille, "The Old 'C&E'"; William Winemiller, "Looking Backward," *The Daily American*, Oct. 1934.]

Chicago Lawn

Robert Droel
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The latest census data from 2000 shows that the population of Chicago Lawn is about 61,412 people. Chicago Lawn in Chicagoland extends from Belt Avenue on the east, Central Park on the west, to 59th Street on the south, to 75th Street.

In 1855, a man named John Frederick Eberhart came to Illinois from the state of Pennsylvania. In 1859, Eberhart who was then twenty-nine years old became the first Cook County Superintendent of Schools. He traveled to schools by horses along very rough roads. In 1871, when Eberhart's term for superintendent expired, he decided to purchase some land, which now extends from 63rd to 67th street, and from Kedzie to Central Park. He paid \$1.25 for an acre of land. With his new land, he hoped to create a prosperous community. He was also able to convince a friend, James Webb, to buy land from 63rd and 59th street, and from Kedzie to Central Park. The two land purchases became the original Chicago Lawn.

After buying the land, Eberhart realized that to make his community successful, he needed a means of transportation. Eberhart decided to get the city of Chicago to build a railroad through his new land. He paid \$5000 for the railroad to be created. This railroad attracted many settlers. After the railroad was built, the community officially became known as Chicago Lawn, although many of its residents preferred "The Lawn." In 1876, Eberhart created the first building of Chicago Lawn, the railroad depot on 63rd and Central Park. The railroad would soon become an important source of bringing supplies to Chicago Lawn. Soon after, he created a real estate office. He later built all the original homes of Chicago Lawn, as well as his own house on 64th street. In 1892, Amos

Cravener's Grocery Store was created on 63rd and Central Park. The store consisted of a meat market as well as the grocery store. Then five pounds of jelly was 13 cents, twenty pounds of cornmeal was a quarter, and soap was a nickel.

The Marquette Manor, the area that surrounds Marquette Park, was later created; after World War I, the Marquette Manor would merge with Chicago Lawn to form one community of Chicago Lawn. Many Lithuanian immigrants came to Marquette Manor, and they still do today.

In 1888, a volunteer fire department was formed in Chicago Lawn. The Station was on 62nd and St. Louis. The only water for the firemen to use was well water, or ditch water, and the only engine they had was a horse pushcart. Luckily the only fires that needed to be put out were prairie fires. In 1898, a horse trolley service was created, a pleasant addition to the community.

In 1889, the residents of Chicago Lawn voted to become part of the city of Chicago. Doing this allowed them to get services from the city. The first city water came in 1898. This was enough for a parade. Parades were very popular in Chicago Lawn, for almost any occasion. In 1909, the first library came to Chicago Lawn. The library consisted of about 1,200 books donated by the downtown library. In 1902, the first telephone service came to Chicago Lawn. People paid \$1.50 per month for service. Eventually 63rd street became a large retail street. In 1908, a shoemaker came to Chicago Lawn and created his Shoe Repair Shop on 63rd and Homan. The Lawn Theater was located at 3419 W. 63rd Street, which was the first theater in Chicago Lawn. It has since been destroyed.

When houses and retail businesses started to appear in the 1920s in Chicago Lawn, so did the immigrants. They were mostly Polish and Lithuanian, who saw Chicago Lawn's job opportunities as a reason to settle there.

Marquette Park had such activities as ice skating and tobogganing in its early days. In 1913, the park opened a large golf course. Marquette Park also consists of 3 1/2 miles of lagoon for fishing.

After World War I, Chicago Lawn grew considerably. By 1925, a "million-dollar" show house was built on 59th and Kedzie. It was called The Colony and could seat 2,500 people. It still stands, abandoned after closing some years ago. Opening in January 1931, was Marzano's Million Dollar Palace of Pleasure bowling alley. It stretched from 3315 to 3331 on 63rd St. Since then, it has been torn down, and moved with the name Marzano's Miami Bowl. Gertie's Ice Cream Parlor was a popular place to go. Built next to the Colony, it got a large amount of business. Within the past year, a telephone company has taken over the building. "Yankee Doodle Dandy," a popular burger bar was down the street from Gertie's. In the 1980s it closed and was replaced by another restaurant. In 1941 Nabisco opened a plant near the southern border of Chicago Lawn.

Throughout Chicago Lawn's history, many churches have been built. Some of them being St. Elizabeth Episcopal, St. Nicholas of Tolentine, and St. Rita Church. Many schools have also been built. There are currently nine high schools in Chicago Lawn. From 1966 to 1988, many civil rights marches occurred in Marquette Manor. Often civil rights groups would confront American Nazi marches.

About 1987, many Mexican immigrants started to settle in Chicago Lawn. They found the employment opportunities attractive, as well as the slightly lower housing costs than surrounding neighborhoods (with most houses priced \$91,000). In 1990 the census records 28 percent of Chicago Lawn residents to be Hispanic. By 2000 over 35 percent is Hispanic. That is equal to 21,534 people as opposed to the 6,190 white (non Hispanic) people. Unlike many communities in Chicago, most billboards and stores are in Spanish. There is also a growing number of Blacks in Chicago Lawn.

The community of Chicago Lawn started off as a large amount of land with a train and a few houses, but has since grown to be a diverse community of hardworking people.

[From: Kathleen J. Headly, *Chicago Lawn/ Marquette Manor*; Student historian's interview with Mary Ann Droel (Chicago Lawn resident), Dec. 27, 2002; Website: Chicago Tribune, www.chicagotribune.com (access date Jan. 5, 2003).]

The Affects of Irish Immigration on the Illinois Valley and La Salle County

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The Irish, traditionally recognized for their contributions to the development of the Catholic Church in the Illinois Valley, did much more than that for the communities of the area. Besides their immense contributions to the development of religion, the Irish also played an important role in the development of the area's economy. It was, and many times still is, the Irish businessmen who run the local businesses. Many of the Irish traditions still play an important part in the everyday life of the people. The tradition of the Saint Patrick's Day Parade is, of course, Irish, but it is not the only Irish holiday and tradition which the area celebrates. Many of the very traditional architectural styles you see on houses of the area are from the Irish. For instance, the traditional Georgian style seen on so many houses in Peru, is a traditional Irish style of building. The immigration of the Irish affected the development of the area's traditions, architecture, religion, and economics in a variety of ways.

The affects of the Irish immigration were very important. Many of the area's leading businessmen were either Irish immigrants themselves or the sons of immigrants from Ireland. William Stone Cherry was an immigrant from Ireland who ran one of the local mines. He became a government official of Streator later in his life. Another man who affected the development of La Salle County businesses was Samuel R. McFeely, who was the vice president of the J C. Ames Lumber Company that is responsible for the building of many of the area's businesses and churches. J. B. Bailey, the area's main horse and carriage supplier, was an Irish immigrant. Perhaps the most influential Irishman was

William F. McNamara, who became the mayor of La Salle at the age of thirty-two. His parents brought him to La Salle as a small child and he grew up to be one of the most influential politicians in the area. The town blacksmith in the 1850s was an Irishman by the name of Jeremiah Collins. Jeremiah was a member of the school board for eighteen years, and contributed greatly to the development of many of the area's public schools. These men and many others of the area were Irishmen who had a profound affect on the political, educational, and economical development of the area.

Perhaps the most important contribution of the Irish was the development of the Catholic faith. One of the major Catholic churches of the area is still St. Patrick's in La Salle. Another church established by the Irish Catholics was Immaculate Conception in Streator. This area has many people of the Catholic faith. One of the main reasons for this is the many Catholic priests that immigrated here from Ireland. One priest was Rev. Henry A. O'Kelly who was the pastor of many of the area's local churches including Immaculate Conception. The Irish people's strong Catholic beliefs were very important to the religious development of the area.

Many of the traditions of today result from the Irish. The two most notable Irish traditions of the area are May Day and St. Patrick's Day. May Day, traditionally celebrated on May 1st, is actually an Irish holiday. May Day was originally held on May 12th, to celebrate the start of summer. In Ireland, as in the Illinois Valley, it was a tradition to set flowers on the doorsteps of the neighboring house. The tradition of St. Patrick's Day is a very important Irish holiday. In Ireland, St. Patrick's Day is a holy day held in reverence by all the people, but it was not until the seventeenth century that the parades started. The Irish reverence of this saint led to the tradition of the area to hold a parade every year on the feast of St. Patrick.

The Irish affect on architecture is one of their most noticeable contributions. For instance, the area's main public high-school, La Salle-Peru, is a scaled down version of the Queen's University, one of the most famous buildings in Ireland. One of the most notable influences of the Irish on the area's architecture is the many Georgian style buildings seen in town. Many of the houses and old businesses contain this architectural style. The John L. McCormick House on Pike Street and the Brady House on Airport Road in Peru are classic examples of this style. They are built of old red brick, and the many small windows which mark a house as being Irish Georgian. The Ernest Gunther House on Second Street in Peru, built in 1853, is also a classic example. The old fashioned stone siding, framed door, and many tiny windows make this house appear very Georgian. Many of the houses on N. Bucklin St. in La Salle exhibit this type of architecture. These houses contain the traditional windows, doors, and the traditional square build of the Georgian house. Both new and old houses exhibit this architecture. The Helmig and Trovero Subdivisions contain many houses with this style doors and windows. The two most noticeable businesses that reflect Georgian style are the old Wesclox building on Fifth Street in Peru, and the old office building of Cams Chemical in La Salle. The Irish were also very influential in the development of La Salle County and the Illinois Valley. Without the Irish, it is very likely that many of the area's traditions would be different, and the main religion would not be Catholic. The Irish influence on architecture helped establish the traditional look of houses in the area. Finally, the economic and political development of the County would have been very different without Irish influence. The Irish were a very important part of the development of the area. [From Elmer Baldwin, *History of La Salle County*; Donald S. Connery, *The Irish*; Mary Murray Delaney, *Of Irish Ways*; Brenden Lehane, *Dublin*; Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*; Thomas A. Shaw, *Story of La Salle*

Mission; Ted Smart, Ireland—A Picture Book to Remember Her by; The Past and Present of La Salle County, Illinois; Record of La Salle County Illinois.]

A History of Belleville

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In the heart of the Mississippi Valley lies the city of Belleville, Illinois. It is located halfway between two oceans and is halfway between the nation's northern and southern boundries. Because of its location, Bellevillians experience all four seasons, but escape the severe northern winters. George Blair and countless others created the city of Belleville in the mid-nineteenth century and the city has an interesting history.

It is not known who was the first white man to set foot on the land where Belleville was established. However, contrary to the popular belief that Belleville was first settled by the Germans and French, it was American war veterans from the eastern seaboard. They were the soldiers under the command of Colonel George Rogers Clark. After their enlistment in the Revolutionary War had ended, some of the soldiers stayed here, while others journeyed back to Virginia and Kentucky. Whether they stayed or went back, these former soldiers were given land grants after the Revolutionary War. Some of the first settlers were John Teter, Abraham Eyman, William Mueller, John Primm, Martin Randleman, and Daniel Stookey.

Belleville is located near the center of St. Clair County. The county which is Illinois' oldest, was created by proclamation in March 1790, by General Arthur St. Clair, the governor of the Northwest Territory. It was decided that Cahokia would be the first county seat. Cahokia had been established in 1690 as a French mission station. French immigrants were attracted to this area from Canada by reports of mild climate and fertile soil. The town became the second most important French settlement in the Illinois

country during the French colonial period, 1763-1777. However, it would go from French control to British and finally American because of Colonel Clark.

Even before Belleville was officially designated as the county seat, the early settlers wanted a more central location from which to govern. Also, the Americans in the highlands began to outnumber the old French settlers of Cahokia. These American settlers wanted to be rid of what they felt were backward settlers. Furthermore, the area where Cahokia was located was river bottomland, which frequently flooded.

Therefore, in December 1813, a committee was appointed by the Illinois Territorial legislature to select the new county seat. John Hay, James Lemen, Issac Enochs, William Scott, Jr., Nathan Chamberts, Jacob Short, and Caldwell Cains were on the committee.

The committee met again on March 12, 1814, at the home of George Blair. His home was built in 1806, and the committee voted to locate the county seat on George Blair's land. The decision had been made easier because Blair had agreed to donate one acre of his land for a public square. The cornfield that would soon become the new county seat had been known as Compton Hill, but since the decision had been made to build the new town on Blair's farm, he wanted to change the name. He had found a place where a settlement would form that might be one of the most beautiful cities in America. He decided to select the French word Belleville, meaning "Beautiful City." It was ironic that the Americans who wanted to move the county seat from the French settlement would give the new town a French name.

Etienne Personeau built the courthouse in 1814 in Belleville, the site for the new county seat. With a charter from the state of Illinois, Belleville officially became a village in 1819. However, the town did not prosper and grow until former governor, Ninian

Edwards bought most of the town's land and had it resurveyed and sold lots to the new settlers from Virginia in 1825.

In 1826, there were only two German families living in Belleville. Between 1829 and 1832 the German population exploded. Germans were drawn to Belleville from Bavaria by the inexpensive, rich farmland and its closeness to St. Louis. The predominate languages changed from French and English and some Irish to German.

The German immigrants contributed a great deal to the growth of the city. German signs and beer gardens soon could be seen throughout the city. Germans quickly became a majority of the population by 1844. The village was officially incorporated as a city in 1850 and by 1855 grew to over 6,000 people.

As late as 1843 some of the streets were still dirt paths through cornfields, but soon streets emerged. When the village was first laid out, it was George Blair who named the first streets. Church Street was the eastern most street. The other north and south streets from the east to the west were Jackson, High, Illinois, Spring and Hill. The latter two names are no longer used. Today, they are named First, Second, Third and so on. The street, which passed through the public square extending east to west, was named St. Clair Ave., but was later changed to Main Street. Today the streets to the south are named after the presidents. For example, the first street south of Main street is named Washington.

Since becoming a city in 1850, Belleville, Illinois, has been home to thousands of people who wake up every morning in this "Beautiful City" and begin their daily activities. Thanks to these people, especially the early immigrants who persevered through the hardships of the early days, Belleville still stands today as the county seat for St. Clair County in Illinois. [From Irwin F. Mather, *The Making of Illinois*; James R.

Maxim, Belleville; Alvin Louis Nebelsick, *A History of Belleville*; George Washington Smith, *History of Southern Illinois*.]

Glen Carbon, "The Valley of Coal"

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The silhouette of a coal miner, Glen Carbon's logo, reminds village residents and visitors about the history of Glen Carbon. The village's name, which means "Valley of Coal" also describes its location. This small southern Illinois village lies on top of seven veins of bituminous coal near the Mississippi River Bluffs. In its 110-year history, Glen Carbon has successfully coped with many changes.

Samuel Judy, a Swiss immigrant, was the first permanent settler in Madison County. He and his family settled near the American Bottoms flood plain in 1801 to farm the fertile soil. Other farmers from the Eastern United States and Europe also came to the Madison County area during the 1800s to make a living in agriculture. In the late 1800s, two of the area's natural resources, coal and shale, attracted industry to the region. In 1884, the St. Louis Brick Company established a brickyard and made bricks from the shale clay from the bluffs. During the late 1880s, several railroads were built that passed through the present Glen Carbon area. The Madison Coal Corporation opened two coal mines and a coal washer near the railroads, which allowed the company to ship the coal to other towns. These two companies greatly increased the population by attracting workers to the area.

With a population of approximately 400, the townspeople voted on June 6, 1892, to incorporate Glen Carbon as a village. The size of the village was rather small, less than two square miles. Businesses such as a general store, theatres, ice cream parlors, a butcher shop, a bottling company, saloons, and doctor's offices were established within the village. A school and several churches were built. Organizations such as a volunteer

fire department, German singing society, baseball teams, and fraternal organizations were founded. But mining was the most prosperous industry in Glen Carbon .

In the late 1800s and early 1900s Glen Carbon was a coal producing city like the surrounding small towns of Maryville, Edwardsville, Collinsville and Troy. During this time, the nation depended on coal for its energy supply and Madison County ranked fifth in coal output in Illinois. Glen Carbon also had a farming community much like other surrounding towns. Glen Carbon also attracted European immigrants such as Bohemians, Italians, Germans, Polish, Irish, Welsh, Russians, and people from other cultures. Many Europeans during this time fled from persecution, looked for opportunities in the United States, and settled in Madison County.

Glen Carbon, however, was different from most of these surrounding small towns because it was a "company town." Much of the land was either owned by the Madison Coal Corporation or the St. Louis Brick Company. Both companies built saltbox type houses for their workers to rent. The Madison Coal Corporation owned about 100 homes for their workers. The St. Louis Brick Company constructed similar company homes for their workers. The general store was owned by the coal company for a while. The coal company also donated land for churches, parks, and a village hall. It provided recreational facilities such as tennis courts, playgrounds, and baseball diamonds. LeRoy Harris, a 91-year-old lifetime Glen Carbon resident and former coal mine worker said, "This was a benevolent company. They did a lot for the village. They kept the streets up.... They put coal ashes on the roads so we had pretty decent roads in the winter. The coal company donated money for the graduation picnics." Some coal company officials were involved in the village's politics. The coal company worked for the good of the village.

In the early 1900s, Glen Carbon continued to grow to a population of about 1,100 mainly because of the prosperous coal mining industry. In 1906, the St. Louis Brick Company burned down and never rebuilt. Glen Carbon flourished even during the early years of the Great Depression because the coal miners had steady jobs. But then, suddenly in April 1931, the Madison Coal Corporation shut down their last coal mine. The newspaper stated that there was a rumor about the mine shutting down because of a warm winter and general conditions in the coal industry. However, others believed competition with Peabody Coal Company was responsible for the mine's closing.

The closing of the mine in 1931 and the Great Depression changed the village from an industrial community to a residential area. Harris explained, "We never really did lose any population after the mines shut down." People kept their houses, because the coal company let them have them pretty cheap, for about \$30 a room. So people stayed here and commuted to work. The population stayed pretty steady, about 1,200, for years. The people commuted to work in other cities like Granite City, Alton, Wood River, and East St. Louis. But many village businesses closed. The population stayed at 1,200 until the 1960s when Interstate 270 was opened and Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville was built and attracted people to nearby Glen Carbon. Subdivisions sprang up and the population increased. Glen Carbon became southern Illinois's fastest growing community in the 1970s. Today Glen Carbon is still growing with a population of approximately 10,500 residents and many businesses are moving to Glen Carbon.

People of many nationalities immigrated to the Glen Carbon area to find work and raise families. How the ethnic diversity of the village affected the development of Glen Carbon has not been adequately researched. It should be covered to learn how so many cultures got along, worked together, and kept the town surviving through the village's changes.

Today, if you ride through "Old Town" Glen Carbon you can still see some of the old saltbox houses but no visible remains of the mines. The railroad tracks have disappeared and have been paved into a bike trail. The village has changed from an industrial village to a pleasant residential community with successful commercial businesses. As Harris concluded, "It's been a great town...with a lot of changes." [From Susan Crain Bakos, "In the Land of Goshen," *St Louis Commerce*, (Sept. 1982); Mark J. Cedeck, Joan Foster, et al., *A History of Glen Carbon; Centennial History of Madison County, Illinois and its people 1812 to 1912*; "Glen Carbon in '92 up to the Present," *Edwardsville Intelligencer*, (Aug. 15, 1957); "Glen Carbon Mine Will Close When Men Clean Entries," *Edwardsville Intelligencer*, (Apr. 17, 1931); "Glen Carbon: Thriving Mine Village," *Edwardsville Intelligencer*, (Sept. 14-21, 1912); "Glen Carbon Traces Roots to Coal Mines," *Edwardsville Intelligencer-Answer Book*, (Sept. 27, 2002); "Old Glen Carbon Tour," *Goshen Preservation Alliance*; "Heritage Trail," *Belleville News-Democrat Sunday Magazine*, (Sept. 26, 1993); "The League of Women Voters," *Know Your Village: Glen Carbon*; Teri Maddox, "Glen Carbon at 100," *Belleville News-Democrat*, (June 14, 1992); "Mines May Close," *Edwardsville Intelligencer*, (Apr. 17, 1931); Dick Norish, *A Pictorial History of Edwardsville and Glen Carbon*; Jennie Raffaele, *A History of Glen Carbon*; "Residents say Glen Carbon 'older person growing young," *Metro-East Journal*, (Mar. 10, 1971); "Village of Glen Carbon," *Edwardsville Intelligencer*, (June 8, 1892); Student historians interview with LeRoy Harris, Glen Carbon (Sept. 14, 2002).]

The Lovejoy Homestead: the Underground Railroad in Illinois

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As a person is traveling U.S. Highway 6, near the intersection of Illinois 26, they will see a traditional white farmhouse just outside the city of Princeton. One may not think anything of it until they read the sign: "Owen Lovejoy Homestead—Underground Station." After visiting this landmark, they would soon find out that this is not just any old farmhouse, but a house listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Lovejoy Homestead was one of Illinois's most active stations on the Underground Railroad, which was a loosely organized, highly secret system that helped thousands of slaves escape the South for freedom in the North. As a result, Princeton became known locally and nationally as a safe haven for these runaway slaves.

Owen Lovejoy lived at this historic site in Illinois. He was a fearless leader in the Underground Railroad, a fiery abolitionist, a gifted speaker, a passionate Congressman, and a fervent family man. Lovejoy was born on June 6, 1811, on a farm in Albion, Maine, where he was raised in a religious atmosphere. He attended Bowdoin College in 1830, but left school in 1833 after the death of his father. Eventually Lovejoy moved to Alton, Illinois to live with his older brother, Elijah, and entered the ministry. His older brother encouraged him to join his fight against slavery. Elijah Lovejoy was the publisher of the *Alton Observer*, a famous abolitionist newspaper. The publication created much controversy, and the residents of the town were hardly supportive of his view. After three of his printing presses had been thrown into the river, he placed his new one in a warehouse for safekeeping. Nonetheless, it did not stop a pro-slavery mob from setting the warehouse on fire and shooting Elijah. As Owen was kneeling next to his brother's

dead body, he experienced a turning point in his life. He was quoted, "While I was beside the prostrate body of my murdered brother, Elijah, with fresh blood oozing from his perforated breast, on my knees, alone with the dead, I vowed never to forsake the cause for which his blood was sprinkled." He knew that he was obligated to never give up the cause which his brother had fought for.

After this tragedy, he moved to the North. As he was traveling, he came to a fork in the road. He could not decide which road to take, so he dropped the reins, said "giddap," and allowed the horse to choose. It took the east fork, which eventually led to Princeton.

He became a pastor in Princeton at the Hampshire Colony Congregational church in 1838. Although he was only twenty-seven years old, he was powerful and alert, and deeply involved in his faith. He was an impressive and persuasive speaker. While he was giving an anti-slavery sermon, some of the members of his congregation walked out. He shouted after them, "I shall preach this doctrine until you like it and then I will preach it because you like it! His conviction that slavery was wrong continued to change the views of many throughout his life.

He lived with Butler and Eunice Denham, a family from his congregation. A few years later, Butler died, and soon after Owen and Eunice were married. They had six children, not including Butler's three daughters. This home became one of the many stations of the Underground Railroad. It was built with black walnut lumber and consisted of fifteen rooms and many narrow hallways. The Lovejoys fed, clothed, and sheltered the slaves and helped them leave on their journey. Slaves were hidden in an area behind a dresser, a large storage area above the stairway, in the cornfield, in the barn, and in the basement.

Lovejoy was both hated and loved in the small community of Princeton. Even though the town was active in the Underground Railroad, there were still many pro-

slavery people in the area. Once, Lovejoy's life was threatened against appearing on main street. However, this did not affect him, and to show his courage he rode down main street many times. No one ever bothered or mistreated him.

One noteworthy event was John Bowen's escape. Bowen was a mulatto slave who had fled from Missouri and arrived in Princeton in 1849. He thought he was safe in the community until his owner surprised him and recaptured him. While his owner was in the courthouse, Bowen was tied to a nearby tree. He managed to escape and ran to the Lovejoy home. Lovejoy arrived at the house before the crowd, and he stood outside with a gun and warned them not to enter. Meanwhile, a huge crowd had gathered in Lovejoy's yard. Suddenly, a dark man was spotted riding off on a horse. They chased him to find that it was not Bowen. Meanwhile, no one noticed a "lady" in a large sunbonnet riding away in a small carriage.

In an attempt to spread his view, Owen Lovejoy entered politics. He was elected for the Illinois House of Representatives, and later for the United States House. While Owen was in Congress, he constantly fought for an end to slavery. He served until his death in 1864.

In 1863, Owen Lovejoy became very ill with Bright's disease. Although the Emancipation Proclamation had been passed, many slaves were not free, and Lovejoy believed that his work was not complete. He died on March 25, 1864. He was buried at Oakland Cemetery in Princeton, Illinois.

After both Owen and Eunice's deaths, their children lived in the Lovejoy home. Soon thereafter, the children moved out, and the house was left desolate. However, the homestead had too much significance in the history of Illinois to be neglected and forgotten. The house was respected because it represented a great soul. Then in April 19,

1967, the state of Illinois Department of Conservation purchased the homestead and began renovating it.

The Lovejoy Homestead is a significant asset to Illinois's history because it is one of the few Underground Railroad stations open to the public. The homestead gives a rare look into the life of a runaway slave, exposing the hiding places and explaining the dangers of the escape. Today, the Lovejoy Homestead is owned by the City of Princeton, and was named a National Historic Landmark in 1997. It carved an important place in the nation's history, and is a crucial part of Princeton's legacy. [From John Barron, "It's like this...", LaSalle, Ill. *News Tribune*, (July 10, 1972); John Barron, "It's like this...; LaSalle, Ill. *News Tribune*, (April 30, 1976); John Drury, *Old Illinois Houses*; Melanie Grivfitti, "Historian Steps Into Abolitionist's Shoes," LaSalle, Ill *News Tribune*, (Sept. 19, 1992); "History of the Owen Lovejoy Homestead," www.loveioyhomestead.com, (Nov. 21, 2002); "Lovejoy Homestead," www.princeton-il.com/areadirectory/specialevents/loveioy.html, (Nov. 21, 2002); "The Lovejoy Homestead," www.lincoln.lib.niu.edu/culturaltourism/hazelsims/index.html, (Nov. 21, 2002); Lovejoy Society, "Owen Lovejoy," www.lovejoysociety.org, (Nov. 21, 2002); "Owen Lovejoy Homestead," www.travelthepast.com/SiteDetails.asp?PK=1812, (Nov. 21, 2002); David Silverberg, "'Underground' Routes Crisscross North Central Illinois," LaSalle, Ill. *News Tribune*, (July 7, 2001); George Owen Smith, *The Lovejoy Shrine*.]

Mound City, Illinois

John Lamszus

Teacher: Bonnie Heidinger

Anna-Jonesboro High School, Anna

In 1855 the Emporium Real Estate and Manufacturing Company was organized for the purpose of building a great and thriving metropolis in southern Illinois on the Ohio River. The company received \$1,500,000, came to Illinois, purchased a large section of land near the newly platted town of Mound City, and named its development Emporium City. The financial backers from large cities in the East had big hopes for the city. In the original plan, there was even room for the capital of the United States. The company built several warehouses, a foundry, houses, and a shipyard. The company soon went bankrupt, however. In 1857, Emporium City and Mound City joined together under the name Mound City. The newly formed town soon grew quickly and served important purposes in the Civil War.

The shipyard or marine ways the Company completed in 1859 was then sold to Hambleton, Collier & Company. The first boat built at the ways was the *R.H.W. Hill*. From 1861 to 1874 the Hambleton Company leased the ways to the United States government for \$40,000 a year. The ways were used to build and repair ships and convert steamers into armored vessels. Three famous ironclad gunboats built there in 1861, under the supervision of James Eads, were the U.S.S. *Cairo*, the U.S.S. *Mound City*, and the U.S.S. *Cincinnati*. These gunboats were used soon to help facilitate the Union victories at such important places as Fort Henry and Fort Donelson. Some of the boats repaired at the shipyards were the U.S.S. *Essex*, the U.S.S. *Pittsburgh*, U.S.S. *Lexington*. U.S.S. *Eastport* and the U.S.S. *Carondelet*. Andrew H. Foote's flagship, the U.S.S. *Benton* was also serviced at the ways. At its height during the Civil War, the ways employed as many

as fifteen hundred men. In addition, in 1863 the U. S. Navy's Mississippi River Squadron moved to Mound City. The fleet included one hundred gunboats, twenty-two transports, thirty-two mortar boats, and eight tugs.

In 1874, the United States government gave the Mound City Marine Ways back to its owner. Even though the buildings of the shipyard burned down in 1879, construction at the ways continued until the 1970s. Altogether, "Twenty-seven large ships and as many as 6,000 floating structures were built at the shipyards...", according to one account. Today, all that remains of the ways from the Civil War era are some sliding ramps, rails, and some concrete foundations. In 2001 the area was placed on the state's top ten most endangered historic sites.

Also affiliated with Mound City during the Civil War is the famous U.S.S. *Red Rover*, the first hospital ship of the United States Navy. This side-wheel steamer was built at Cape Girardeau, Missouri, and bought by the Confederacy in 1861. After it was hit by a Union ship and run aground to avoid sinking in 1862, the crew of the U.S.S. *Mound City* captured it and made temporary repairs so that it could be towed. The ship was refitted as a hospital ship in new, innovative ways. The overseer of the project once wrote, "I wish you could see our hospital boat, the *Red Rover*, with all her comforts for sick and disabled seamen. ...and is in every way a decided success." Commissioned at Mound City, the *Red Rover* entered service on June 1862. In a July 1862 battle in Arkansas, when the gunboat *Mound City* was struck and many were injured, the *Red Rover* transported thirty-seven of them to the Mound City Naval Hospital. During the winter of 1862, when the *Red Rover* was refitted at nearby Cairo, its patients were transferred to the Mound City Hospital. Over 1500 patients were treated aboard the ship from 1862 to 1865. A total of 1,365 of these patients were discharged, and 157 died on board. Some of the *Red Rover's* female medical personnel were the first women to

officially serve aboard a naval vessel, including African-American women, some of whom had been taken on board as contraband. They were later listed on the ship's roster as naval nurses.

One of the warehouses built by the Emporium Company was converted into the Mound City Naval Hospital in 1861. In October 1861 the first of a contingent of Holy Cross nuns reported to General Grant at Cairo, and several of them served throughout the war as nurses at the hospital and on board the *Red Rover*. After the Battle of Shiloh, over 2,000 soldiers were treated there. The hospital was the largest in the Union Army's Western Campaign and the last one to close when the war ended. After the war, the Hospital served many uses. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974 but was destroyed by fire in 1976. Most of those who died in the hospital were buried near the hospital. The government bought ten acres of land near Mound City in 1862 and created the Mound City National Cemetery. The dead from the Hospital were reburied there along with 4,800 from the Civil War.

In 1861, the Pulaski County seat moved to Mound City, signifying the town's growth. Pulaski County more than doubled its population during the 1860s, in part because of the wartime efforts in Mound City.

Although now quite small, Mound City has an interesting history. Other towns of similar size have not had such a rich history as Mound City enjoys. Seeing the town today, one might not appreciate its historical significance; however, this little southern Illinois town played an important role in the Civil War. [From "Arson-Related Fire Destroys Historic Civil War Hospital." *The Cairo Evening Citizen*, (April 29, 1976); Darwin Campbell, "Waterfront Preservation Sought at Mound City," *The Paducah Sun*, (Sept. 17, 2001); Catherine Deans-Barrett, "History of Mound City Marine Ways During CW," *The Cairo Evening Citizen*, (April 13, 1961); Travis DeNeal, "Historian Hoping

Old Shipyard Makes List of Endangered Sites," *Southern Illinoisan*, (Feb. 23, 2001); William G. Farrar, "In Memoriam-Mound City Civil War Naval Hospital, ca. 1858-1976," *Historic Illinois*, (Dec. 1978); Robert M. Hurst Jr., "Marine Ways at Mound City Played Important Part in the History of This Nation." *Cairo Evening Citizen*, (Nov. 2, 1938); Jeannine Koranda, "Endangered Historic Sites," *Southern Illinoisan*, (March 21, 2001); William Nelson Movers, *Movers' Brief History of Pulaski County-1843-1943*; Ray Owen, "Endangered Status Sought for Historic Southern Illinois Shipyards," *Southeast Missourian*, (Mar. 6, 2001); William H. Perrin ed., *History of Alexander, Union, and Pulaski Counties*; Steven Louis Roca, "Presence and Precedence: the USS *Red Rover* During the Civil War, 1861-1865," *Civil War History*, June 1998; Linda Rush, *Legacies of Little Egypt*.]

The Founding of Peoria and Its Environment

John Losby
Teacher: Mindy Juriga
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Originally, the area surrounding present-day Peoria was an environment untouched by man. A tranquil river with crystal clear water, and a forest with an abundance of game surrounded this river on both sides. This scene slowly changed with the arrival, in 1673, of the Europeans who were traveling in crude Indian canoes. As a result, the abundance of resources has given the city of Peoria life, and it is no surprise that throughout history the area has allowed two French settlements and an American settlement to grow on the banks of Lake Peoria.

Two courageous men were the founding fathers of French Peoria. The first was Henri DeTonti. He worked under the famed explorer, Robert LaSalle whose accomplishments include claiming the entire Mississippi valley for France.

The story of Peoria began with these two men in the late 1600s in a different location. In 1673, LaSalle's team of explorers met the Peoria Indians in present day Iowa. In spite of the fact that the tribe's original homeland was Illinois, the aggressive Iroquois tribe had pushed them into Iowa. The Native Americans suggested that the team travel up the Illinois River because plentiful lands surround it. When they landed, LaSalle, DeTonti, and their team founded Fort Crevecouer, named after French for broken heart. This fort was originally built for French exploration of the Gulf of Mexico. Afterward, in 1680, disaster occurred and the workmen abandoned the fort as a result of a mutiny. A year later, LaSalle set out to explore the Mississippi and left DeTonti in charge of the Native Americans that they had unified against the aggressive Iroquois. Fort St. Louis

was out of reach of water and the Native Americans in the area and the French settlers strained the water supply as well as food sources.

This problem at Fort St. Louis resulted in DeTonti moving the fort to present day Adams Street. The new fort was designed so Native Americans friendly to the French could come to the fort for protection against the Iroquois. These friendly Native Americans included the five tribes of the Illinois nation, which included the Peoria Indians. Shortly after the founding of the fort, a mission was added and headed by Father Sebastian Rasle and Father Jacques Gravier. The fort proved to be of great importance because it maintained the French fur trade monopoly. Another purpose of Fort St. Louis was to defend the Mississippi Valley, which LaSalle had earlier claimed, from the Iroquois and the English. The English were at the time a potential threat to France because the two countries were at war in the 1690s. The uses of the fort do not end here; it was also used to bring settlers to the Mississippi valley and convert the Native Americans to Roman Catholicism.

Though in the 1690s New Fort St. Louis thrived, good times did not last too much longer. France and Britain finally made peace in 1697; as a result, France turned its attention elsewhere. Native Americans no longer relied on the fort because the Iroquois's threat decreased. The year of 1703 brought more bad luck for Fort St. Louis. DeTonti was in grave debt as a result of the expenses he paid to keep the fort going for so many years. The fort's economy was also in trouble because the French government issued laws that regulated trade and finally the settlers were ordered to leave.

By 1778 the Mississippi valley was under American control, yet most of the inhabitants in the Peoria area were French or Native Americans. Although Fort St. Louis was gone by 1778, another Frenchman founded another village. Eventually, this village

died after Americans drove out the settlers. In 1819, the final set of founding fathers arrived on horseback and began to build Peoria.

The reason Peoria was founded and then died and was settled again becomes obvious when the facts are closely examined. The Illinois River's abundance of fish and adjacent woods overflowing with game is one reason the location had been popular among Native Americans and settlers. The Illinois River alone can be credited with giving birth to Peoria because LaSalle and de DeTonti had arrived there via Indian canoes after Indians told the two of the area's abundance. Moreover, Peoria started out as a farming village as a result of the rich soil and even today inhabitants take advantage of this resource. The presence of corn and clear fresh water allowed distilleries to flourish. For these reasons, Lake Peoria has presented many opportunities to its inhabitants and as a result the Native Americans called it Pimitoui, meaning "land of great plenty."

For about 120 years the French lived in Pimitoui, but little is left of their legacy. A few street names and a hotel called Pere Marquette are all that remains of the French past. For many years the existence of a French fort located where Peoria is today was nothing but a fable. However, in November 2001, evidence was found of the fort. The site of this discovery was Northeast Adams Street, where a foundation of a cabin and a broken wine bottle were unearthed.

In conclusion, the abundance of resources has given the city of Peoria life, and it is no surprise that throughout history the area has nurtured two French settlements and one American settlement on the banks of Lake Peoria. Peoria has survived for hundreds of years and thanks to its environment, it has become a bustling city with well over 100,000 citizens. [From Bill Adams, *Bill Adams Tester Days*; Bill Adams, "The Village that Became Peoria," *The Journal Star*, (Oct. 28, 1991); "The City Started as a Fort on the River," *Observer*, (Oct. 2, 1991); John Clayton, *The Illinois Fact Book and Historical*

Almanac 1673- 1678; James E. Davis, *Frontier Illinois*; Elaine Hopkins, "Artifacts Provide Links to Peoria's French Past," *The Journal Star*, (Nov. 10, 2001); Jerry Klein, *Peoria!*; Brian J. Ogg, *Wish You Were Here: Peoria Edition*; "Peoria—First European Settlement in Illinois." Online. Internet. Available URL: <http://www.peoria.org/history.cfm>, (Sept. 10, 2002).]

Breese, My Hometown

Scott Restoff

Teacher: Stephanie Garcia

All Saints Academy, Breese

All of us have read about small towns in America. I live in one in southern Illinois. It is home to about 4,000 people, three churches, four schools, and many other activities. But before this, squatters inhabited the area where the town now stands. They left during the War of 1812. In 1816, two men founded the settlement by way of a road and built their houses on it. The road was the Goshen Road, and the houses belonged to George Green and Joseph Johnson.

Soon after these two men settled Breese, many more settlers arrived and built a toll bridge across Shoal Creek, north of Breese. A few years later, these same settlers opened a post office and a store next to the toll bridge. In 1835, many German farmers from the east coast came to the area to make a living by farming. As the area increased in population and commerce, it was hit by a deadly malarial epidemic in 1849. Farmers began to build crosses as a form of prayer to God to stop the epidemic. By the time the epidemic had run its course, not only had many died, but many other people fled the area in fear. When the epidemic ended in 1850, the area began to grow again. However, growth was slow, until the completion of the Mississippi and Ohio Railroad in 1885, bringing many travelers into the area. Not long afterward, businesses began forming, and churches and schools were built, along with a water and electrical plant. A volunteer fire department was also created in 1885. But one thing was missing, a name. Many names were discussed, but one name stood out more than any other: Breese.

Sidney Breese was recognized at both the national and the state levels for his political wisdom. He was born in New York on July 15, 1800, but came to Kaskaskia in

1820, the state capital of Illinois, to study law in Jackson County. A few years later, he became the Assistant Secretary of State, and helped move the state archives to Vandalia, Illinois, the state capital. In 1845, after Sidney completed his work in Vandalia, he moved to a farmhouse just outside of Carlyle, Illinois, just eight miles from Breese. His house, still standing, is the home of the Clinton County Museum. Sidney Breese later became a United States Senator, Speaker of the Illinois House, and Chief Justice of Illinois. But Breese is mainly remembered for his work creating the Illinois Central Railroad. Breese, Illinois, officially became a town on January 19, 1905, and it was named in memory of the great Sidney Breese.

Henry Hummert was elected the city's first mayor. By this time the town included five schools, three churches, and most things that a prosperous town needed. As time progressed, Breese became more modern. In April 1937, Edward Meier opened the Excel Bottling Company. This company is still in business, making Ski soda, which cannot be found anywhere in the world except Clinton County, Illinois and neighboring towns. Many other new stores and business were established including Wally's Malt Shop, which Walter Knue opened in 1951. He is still in business today.

When visiting Breese, one will see a town with over 3,000 people and new subdivisions. There is also a lot of history in this small town of Breese. As the sign says it is a town "known for its friendliness". It is a wonderful place to live. [From "City of Breese," www.Breese.org, (Jan. 15, 2003); Burtshi, Mary, *Vandalia*; James Schlueter, committee chairman, *Breese, Quasicentennial Celebration, 1856-1981*.]

S.S. Rushville Victory Ship

Curtis Sargent
Teacher: Vicki Harrison
Schuyler Middle School, Rushville

During World War II, Rushville, Illinois had the honor of having a ship named after it. This was quite an honor at that time, because there were only fifty "Victory Ships" named after cities throughout the United States. Only two cities in Illinois were chosen. The other city was Blue Island, near Chicago. According to the Maritime Commission, the 534 Victory ships were built to replace the Liberty Ships. They were constructed to be much larger, faster and more structurally sound for attacks against enemy attacks. They were designed as cargo vessels, but were used to transport troops, ammunition, and supplies.

After all towns of small or medium population in the state, the Maritime Commission selected Rushville because of its part in the war effort, its historical background, and it was regarded as an All-American community. Due to the support of the Scripps family, the community gained national recognition as a recreational center when, in 1921, the Scripps homestead farm was donated to the city by E. W. Scripps. He was the founder of the Scripps-Howard newspaper syndicate. The Scripps family had first settled in Rushville in 1844.

The christening of the Rushville Victory Ship took place at the Bethlehem-Fairfield Shipyards in Baltimore, Maryland on April 24, 1945. The Schuyler Community Club voted for Betty Dill Miles Stetson to attend as a representative for Rushville. She was a student at Illinois College. She was chosen because she had a brother and husband overseas at the time. The club's commitment was to equip the ship with a modern library

and to raise money for Stetson's expenses. She was very proud and excited to represent Rushville at the christening.

Others attending the launching included many residents and former residents of Rushville. A Rushville native, Jesse Street, who was enlisted in the Navy and stationed in that area, was chosen to press the button to launch the ship. He was honored and felt that this helped to promote Rushville, Illinois's recognition.

There were only two Rushville natives that had the opportunity to ride the ship. They were Harold Davis and William Bartlow. They were in France waiting to come home. The first ship sent to bring them home was the Lehigh Victory Ship. The S. S. Rushville Victory Ship sailed in a day later. Both of them bragged that it would have been a great honor to ride home aboard the ship named after their home town. The next thing they knew their group was assigned to ride home aboard the Rushville Victory Ship. They both felt proud as they pulled out of LeHavre, France, on Christmas Eve 1945. Both Davis and Bartlow remember the terrible storms and rough water, and nearly everyone on board suffering with sea sickness. There was much discussion aboard the ship as to whether the ship was named after a city in Illinois or Indiana. This argument was resolved by a plaque aboard the ship and an article in the ship's newsletter, "Atlantic Express," confirming that it was named after a city in Illinois.

There is conflicting evidence about what happened to the ship after the war. Some thought it had been scrapped and others thought it was sold to Denmark. Neither the Naval Historical Foundation nor the United States National Archives could find any information in their records as to what happened to the Rushville Victory Ship.

Having a victory ship named after their hometown gave the citizens of Rushville a great sense of pride. It was a great honor in Rushville's contribution to the war efforts

during World War II. [From The Big Rush," *Atlantic Express*, (Dec. 26,1945); student historian's interview with Harold E. Davis, (Dec. 21,2002); "50th 'Small-Town' Victory Launching," *Baltimore Sun*, (Apr. 25,1945); "First Rushville G. I.'s Aboard Hometown Boat," *Atlantic Express*, (Dec. 27,1945); "Rushville Victory Ship Launched April 24th at Baltimore, Maryland." *Rushville Times*, (May 3, 1945); *Schuyler County Illinois History*, (1985); Shipyards and Suppliers for the United States Maritime Commission During World War II, "Ships Built Under Maritime Commission Contracts by Shipyard," www.usmm.nct/shipbuild.html, (Dec. 15, 2002); S. S. Rushville Victory Ship Display, Schuyler County Jail Museum, Rushville, Illinois; "S. S. Rushville Victory Was Christened in Fine Manner," *Rushville Times*, (May 3, 1945).]

Early Ogle County

Brandon Schroeder
Teacher: Sara Werckle
Oregon High School, Oregon

In the area of Ogle County before any whites had settled, it consisted of clear streams, a number of groves, and large expanses of prairie. Indians used to burn the prairie so it was easier for them to hunt. There were not many trees on the prairies because the prairie grass had such a thick root system it would not allow anything to grow. If a seedling started to grow, the fires from the Indians burned it. Ogle County was not just prairie; it had many trees in some areas. Where there were trees there was no undergrowth beneath them. The terrain was 58 percent prairie, 21 percent timber, and the rest was terrace soils, swamps, and bottomland.

The first white men to set foot on what is now Ogle County were French fur traders and trappers. These men gave the large bend in the Rock River its name Grand De Tour. On the other side of Grand De Tour lived Pierre LaSallier, a French fur trader. He arrived there sometime between 1800 and 1818. He was a guide for Major Stephen Long, who came from Fort Dearborn on a trip to Prairie du Chien in 1823. These white men were the first to go overland through this area. Pierre's wife was an Indian like many of the fur traders' wives. His daughter was the wife of Joe Ogee. Joe ran the first ferry across Rock River.

The tip of Illinois was part of the Northwest Territory. In 1801 it was called Saint Clair County, which was a part of the Indian Territory. It changed hands many times from Madison County to Putnam County. In January 1836, the legislature formed Ogle County, which was suggested by Thomas Ford in memory of Captain Joseph Ogle, who

distinguished himself for his courage and coolness in the siege of Fort Henry in the early days of the country's history.

When word was sent back to relatives and friends about the wonderful Rock River Valley, immigration began to increase. Newspapers ran articles about the fertile Rock River Valley and how to get there. The immigrants traveled in wagons, some with horses, but most with oxen since they were cheaper and easier to feed. The Panic of 1837 was another factor that contributed to the immigration to Ogle County. The panic caused many people to move to a new place.

The same act that created Ogle County, stipulated that commissioners be appointed to locate the county seat. There was a quarter section of land that was to be sold off in lots. The money raised would be used to build the court house and the county jail. There was a large Indian mound on the county square where the buildings were to be built. It had to be leveled by Joseph Knox in July 1839. The first county building that was built was the jail in 1840. It was a two-story stone building. The building was only eighteen square feet. This jail did not prove to be very safe. A prisoner dug his way out with an old jack knife in less than an hour. With the gang activity surrounding the jail it was necessary to build a jail that was safer. In 1846 a second jail was built costing \$1,990. This one was used until a sheriff's residence and jail costing nearly \$20,000, was built in 1874.

The first court house was built in March 1841. It was a two-story brick building. On March 21, the day before court convened, the court house was set on fire and it burned to the ground. It was set on fire by six of the "Prairie Bandits" whose comrades were in jail. They thought that burning it down would destroy all the records and they could set their friends free. But all the court records were at home with the clerk. A second court house

was built. After proving to be too small and inadequate, the present court house was built in 1892. It cost \$100,000.

Ogle County began to grow rapidly. With all the people moving into the area creating towns. These people did not have televisions or a radio. Social life with friends and neighbors was an important factor in the growth of Ogle County. Barn raisings were something for the people to do. The men built the barns and the women cooked for them. Weddings were always a festive occasion. There were quilting bees, spelling bees, threshing bees, and there was always a big dinner that followed after each event. The first band in the county was organized in Mt. Morris in 1845.

Still more and more people come to Ogle County especially for festive reasons like Autumn On Parade held in Oregon. The Ogle County fair draws many peoples attention. It seems to be the cross roads of Northern Illinois. [From City of Oregon, "Attractions," www.oregonil.com/attractions.asp, (Sept. 24, 2002) Ogle County Board, *Bicentennial History of Ogle County*; Welcome to Ogle County, "History," www.oglecounty.org/, (Sept. 24, 2002).]

James Robert Williams

Amber South
Teacher: Larry Hughes
Booth School, Enfield

Known for his wealth, power, leadership, and his home, James Robert Williams influenced his community and nation. The castle-like home he built in Carmi, Illinois, is still a residence today.

Born on December 27, 1851, in Burnt Prairie, Illinois, James Robert Williams was the son of Thomas and Susan Rawls Williams. As a child, he attended several schools in the area. Williams graduated in the classical course from the University of Indiana in Bloomington on July 7, 1875. During his time at the university, he began to take an interest in law. As a result, he attended the Union College of Law in Chicago, Illinois. On June 10, 1876, he completed his law course and was admitted to the bar the following month. He opened a law office in Carmi, Illinois, on August 1, 1876, in the Schumacher building on Main Street.

Williams was Master of Chancery from 1880-1882. In April 1882 he was nominated for county judge by the Democratic convention. He was elected on November 7 by a majority of 1,295 votes, and served a four-year term.

After his term as county judge, he resumed his law practice. He continued to take an interest in politics, and as a result, the Democrats nominated him for Congress. Williams served several terms in the United States House of Representatives. He was elected to the Fifty-First Congress in 1889 to fill the vacancy resulting from Richard W. Townsend's death. His character and propensity for service as a Congressman resulted in his re-election, and he served a total of fourteen years from the White County district.

In 1900 his name was presented to the National Convention at St. Louis, Missouri, as a candidate for vice-president. In 1902, the *Chicago Chronicle* said he was being groomed for president. "Bob Williams for President" headlined the *Chicago Evening Post* on November 9, 1903. In 1903, Illinois Democrats nominated Williams for the United States Senate. He did not win but received a letter from Williams Jennings Bryan, who expressed an interest in talking with him about plans for 1904. Because of his friendship with Williams, Bryan made a whistle-stop visit to Carmi in 1896 to give a presidential campaign speech.

Despite his occupation with politics, Williams was also a family man. On November 26, 1884, he married Miss Minnie (Mary) Shannon. Mary's grandfather was a doctor and her father was a lawyer. His marriage to Mary gave Williams resources that equaled his political power. Therefore, he purchased several thousand acres of land in White County, Illinois, including the entire section of land across from the courthouse, which is where he built his house. In 1896, he hired David Getaz of Knoxville, Tennessee, to build his home. When interviewing Cindy Conley, genealogist and Carmi historian, she commented that Williams built his house in this particular spot as a way of showing his power and wealth.

George F. Barber designed the home of Williams. Barber was born in DeKalb, Illinois, in 1854. In the 1800s he established a mail-order architectural business in DeKalb, but later moved his business to Knoxville, Tennessee. By 1900 his business, George F. Barber and Company, had become one of the most successful mail-order businesses, selling over 20,000 sets of plans before ending his mail-order portion in 1908. Today at least 200 of his homes have been identified and remain intact. Williams's three-story home with three turreted towers mimics that of a miniature castle, and is the only home known for its design of Romanesque, Queen Anne, and exotic styling. It is also the

only brick home by Barber in southern Illinois. The cost to build Williams's home was \$9,000, which was considered a lot of money at that time.

The Williams's had two sons, Thomas Shannon Williams and Robert Ready Williams. Thomas was mentally ill and spent most of his life in institutions. The youngest son, Robert, married Claire Arnat in 1928. Their son, James Robert Williams, was born in 1933.

When Williams retired in 1905, he and Mary moved to Loma Linda, California, to be closer to their family. On November 8, 1923, Williams died at a sanitarium at Loma Linda. He was brought back to Carmi, and funeral services were held at his home. He was buried at Maple Ridge Cemetery in Carmi. Soon after, Mary and Robert Ready Williams died. The home of Williams was left in the hands of his daughter-in-law, Claire.

Claire moved into the house in 1955. She lived there until the late 1960s and decided to sell the house because of the damage by an earthquake in 1968 and a tornado in 1969. In 1985, Claire sold the house to the city of Carmi for \$ 165,000. The city of Carmi had plans to raze the house to make room for a new public library. Before razing the home, the city held a tour of the house, and Claire had pamphlets made to memorialize Williams and his home. During the tour, many people were amazed with how well the house looked and were convinced of the house's significance. As a result, the "Save the Castle" committee was formed. After hard work, the Williams's house was put on the National Register of Historic Places on January 29, 1987.

On August 15, 1988, the city sold the "castle" for \$75,000 to Mitchell Bailey, taking a loss of \$90,000. Mitchell was from Chicago and was a former resident of Edwards County, Illinois. Mitchell had inherited money and began restoring the house. However, he ran out of money and the bank was left with the house. In the summer of 1993, the bank sold the home to John and Louise Malnik of Virginia. In an interview with Louise

in July 2002, she said they have made some changes to the house. They added a sunroom and deck, finished half of the third floor, and turned the office into a kitchen. She loves living in the house that once belonged to James Robert Williams. [From Barry Cleveland, "Castle Sold to Chicago Man," *The Carmi Times*, (Aug. 16, 1988); student historian's interview with Cindy Conley, (July 8, 2002); "History of Williams Told at Meeting," *White County Historian*, (June 5, 1960); Jari Jackson, "350 Residents Rally in Bid to Save Castle," *The Evansville Courier*, (Aug. 13, 1988); student historian's interview with Louis Malnik, (July 28, 2002); "101 Year Old Mansion was Home To Prominent Family," *The Carmi Times*, (Nov. 5, 1997); "Our 'Bob' Died in California," *The Carmi Times*, (Nov. 15, 1923); Michael A. Tomlan, "George F. Barbors Cottage Souvenir Number Two," *American Life* (1982).]

Tunneling Through Towns

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Existing as a series of complex tunnels stretching over 109 miles beneath many Chicago suburbs, the Deep Tunnel Project is an important part of several communities' history and their future. Designed in the 1970s as a plan to solve the problem of flooding and water pollution in the Chicagoland area, the Deep Tunnel was selected as the most effective way to control the crisis. Under the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan, or TARP, over one hundred miles of huge underground tunnels were dug beneath the suburbs to hold excess amounts of sewer overflow and eventually carry it to reservoirs where it would be processed. In northern Illinois, 52 connected sewer systems were built. Because of the multiple systems being connected, billions of gallons of water, sewage, and a mixture of dirt compete to be purified at the same time and at the same place, the sewer treatment plants. When a big storm rushes through, dumping over 5 billion gallons of low quality water on the Chicagoland area, which has treatment centers that can only process two billion gallons a day, the demand is great. This excess water ends up flooding basements, streets, or eventually going straight into Lake Michigan, further polluting the area's drinking water. One can see the need for this huge span of tunnels. Without the project, the Chicagoland area would be full of sick people, and the residents would often be flooded.

How many billions of gallons of water can Chicago store? With the addition of the new reservoir systems—one already completed near O'Hare and two in construction in Thornton and the McCook areas—will add 15.6 billion gallons of storage in addition

to the billions that the tunnels can hold. This will help flooding in the areas, stop some of the pollution of Lake Michigan, and ultimately improve the sewer problem faced by northeastern Illinois. However, with sewage being stored in areas near people's homes, what affect will the reservoirs have on their surrounding areas?

The Thornton Quarry, formerly the world's largest limestone quarry, will become the home for one such reservoir. The northern lobe, which stretches across 35 acres, was taken by a court order from Material Services Corporation for flood control. However, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District is working on expanding the area, and by doing so, forcing a decrease in the size of the Thornton Industrial District. By doing so, the village of Thornton lost tax money paid by these companies, and when the town's average annual budget is only \$1.2 million dollars, that does some damage to the town's economy. Furthermore, the smell of decaying sewage in the nearby quarry may drive some businesses away, not to mention everyday citizens.

The Deep Tunnel Project is a valuable plan that has contributed to the success of Chicagoland, and its suburbs. Without the smell of sewage and with dry roads, the Northeastern Chicagoland area was able to grow. However, with such success on a wide scale, people forget about the problems it has caused. As much as the tunnel is a part of Chicagoland's history, it also serves as a foundation for what is to happen in the future. Maybe a further solution is needed to rid the towns of the effects of storing sewage in the suburbs. [The Village of Thornton, "North Lobe Quarry Project,"

www.thornton60476.com/deep_tunnel.htm, (May 21, 2002); The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, <http://www.mwrdgc.dst.il.us/>, (May 22, 2002); South Holland Illinois, "Deep Tunnel Flood Relief Program," <http://www.southholland.org/Tunnel.htm>, (May 19, 2002).]

The History of Riverview Amusement Park

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Riverview Amusement Park was located on 3300 North Western Avenue in Chicago, Illinois. The park was bounded on the east by Western Avenue by the Chicago River on the south by the Belmont Avenue out and on the by Lane Tech High School. It included 156 acres of land.

The area where Riverview was located was settled by German immigrants. Riverview was originally a twenty-two acre park named Schuetzen Park by the Germans. Schuetzen Park was a shooting range owned by a wealthy German family, the Schmidts. Wilhelm A. Schmidt and his partner, George Goldman, bought Riverview's land from the Sharpshooter Association, which dissolved. Schmidt and Goldman then ran the park as picnic grounds until 1903. Then Schmidt's son, George, returned from school in Europe. George suggested to his father that they should add rides to the park like some of Europe's parks he had visited. William Johnson, a lawyer, and Joseph McQuade, a banker, helped by supplying more financing in 1904 and Sharpshooters Park became a full-blown amusement park. The new park was named "Riverview Sharpshooters Park." It opened July 2, 1904. The first major rides were the White Flyer roller coaster and the Aero-Stat or otherwise known to Chicagoans as the Strat-0-Stat.

In 1906, the park added 50 acres and 500,000 dollars worth of new attractions. These were Over the Waves, Rollin's Wild Animal Area, Dancing Pavilion, an Igorrote Indian Village from the Philippines, an Ostrich Farm, and a Crocodile Ranch. The Double Whirl, which started operating in the later half of the 1906 season, had six ferris

wheels that moved around the middle post. A new front gate was added in 1907. An automobile race track, the 50,000 dollar Velvet Coaster, the Hellgates, and the Top roller coaster were also added in 1907. Riverview had made a new section of the park called Fairyland in 1907. It was where the famous Shoot-the-Chutes ride was located.

At the back of the park, construction on the Marine Causeway (also known as the River Walk) began. The Pikes Peak Scenic Railway was also built in 1907. One of Riverview's biggest attractions of 1908 season was the Battle of the *Monitor* and *Merrimac*, which was a recreation of the Civil War naval battle. The Aerial 10 Coaster wrapped around the *Merrimac* building and the Royal Gorge Scenic Railway.

The famous 70-horse carousel was put in Fairyland in 1908. It was carved by a group of Swiss-Italian carvers employed by the Philadelphia Toboggan Company. All the expanding of the park enabled the park to expand to 102 acres.

In 1909 the named changed again to Riverview Exposition Park. Three rides were added to the 1909 season. The Tickler, the Witching Waves, and the Expo Whirl were added. Riverview had also put on reenactments of Indian gathering and fights. In 1910, Riverview introduced The Derby, its first racing coaster. The Aerial Coaster was removed for 1911 and another coaster, the first Blue Streak, took its place. Riverview put in a motorcycle race track called The Metrodome in 1911.

In 1913, Riverview Exposition Park was renamed Riverview Park. The following year the Jack Rabbit coaster was added. In 1915, a bicycle race track was added to Riverview. Even though World War I was going on, Riverview added more attractions. In the 1920s, five attractions were added. The park grew to 156 acres in 1920. Riverview also bought an 180-foot Ferris Wheel. A fun house called Noah's Ark was introduced in 1920. The fun house, Bug House, and sections of the Derby Racer caught on fire in the early 1930s. The foot-long hot dog was introduced by George Schmidt. The Bug House

was replaced with Aladdin's Castle. With World War II coming, there was little money for new attractions.

The 1950s saw three rides added. Riverview also added The Hot Rods racing cars in 1954. It took \$175,000 to remodel the Blue Streak coaster in 1959.

Many rides were added in the 1960s. Sadly Riverview closed forever in 1967. Brian Heywood was going to build a Riverview II in Calumet City, Illinois, but the land was not available for purchase. He tried Dolton, Illinois, but could not purchase land there either. Riverview has since been replaced with a shopping center and a police station. The carousel was moved to Six Flags Over Georgia.

Riverview sounded like a fun place to go with your friends. Many generations of children have not gone to Riverview but have been told stories of it and wished to be able to ride one of Riverview's famous coasters. I am one of those children. [From Chicago (Illinois...U.S.A), "Riverview Park," <http://members.tripod.com/n9yap/rivervie.htm>, (Nov. 16, 2002); Gee, Derek, *Laugh Your Troubles Away*; Ravenswood Community History Project, "Riverview Gone But Not Forgotten: A Short History," <http://collaboratory.nunet.net/waters/recreation.htm>, (Nov.15, 2002); Riverview Park, "Riverview Park: Its Role in a Changing Metropolitan Area," <http://www.defunctparks.com/parks/IL/riverview/riverviewpark.htm>, (Nov. 15, 2002); Sharpshooters Productions, Inc., "A Short History of Riverview Park," <http://www.riverviewparkchicago.com/generic>, (Nov. 14,2002); "History-1907," <http://www.riverviewparkchicago.com/generic>, (Nov.14, 2002); "History-1907/1908." <http://www.riverviewparkchicago.com/generic>, (Nov.14,2002); "History-1909/1919," <http://www.riverviewparkchicago.com/generic>, (Nov.14,2002); "History-Roaring Twenties," <http://www.riverviewparkchicago.com/generic>, (Nov. 14, 2002); "Riverview

News," <http://www.riverviewparkchicago.com/newspr.html>, (Nov. 15, 2002); Chuck Woldarczyk, *Riverview*.]

The Silkwood Inn

Celia Voyles

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The story of Priscilla's hollyhocks and the Silkwood Inn used to be taught in Illinois history as a story from a textbook and even has a poem that was set to music. Today, the Silkwood Inn is a Illinois landmark. It was built by Brazilla Silkwood in 1828 as a log cabin. Eventually it became an inn because it was halfway to St. Louis on the Shawneetown-Kaskaskia trail. Silkwood was known for his love of children, but he had none of his own. Thus, many orphaned children or nieces and nephews grew up in the Silkwood Inn because they had no where else to go. Eventually, Brazilla raised fourteen children. With the addition of the children, the inn was no longer a place of business but their home. The Silkwood Inn was home to Priscilla and the story of her hollyhocks.

One of the children of the Silkwood Inn, and perhaps the most famous was Priscilla. Brazilla Silkwood was able to travel often and he met her in Georgia, where she worked as a slave. She was a quarter black, and was called "the quadroon slave girl." Silkwood and Priscilla became friends, and several years after their introduction, in the winter of 1838, they met again in Jonesboro, Illinois. Priscilla's master had died and she was sold to a Cherokee Indian chief. Priscilla was on the Trail of Tears with her master when Silkwood found her. Brazilla recognized her immediately, and bought Priscilla from the chief for a thousand dollars in gold. Priscilla, at the sight of Silkwood, is said to have gone up to him and said, "I'm sure you don't remember me," and was ecstatic when he did. She was fourteen when she was taken to live at the Silkwood Inn.

The tale of the hollyhocks is told as follows. Just before she was sold, Priscilla took some hollyhock seeds from the bush near her plantation home in Georgia. The seeds

remained her only possessions while traveling the Trail of Tears. Those same seeds stayed in her pockets until she got to the Silkwood Inn, where they were planted. The descendants of those seeds still bloom every spring in front of the Silkwood Inn. In their first years they were a reminder to Priscilla of her old home. Today the flowers are a reminder of the past. Later Priscilla was forced to move from the Silkwood Inn to the Bullock house after Brazilla died. Hollyhocks can be seen there today, the descendants of the ones she planted almost a century ago.

Taking in Priscilla was behavior common for Brazilla because, although he was not active in the anti-slavery movement, he disparaged slavery. Priscilla, until the day she died, was a member of the Mulkeytown Christian church, the first Christian church in Illinois, and continued to care for the children that Silkwood had taken in during his lifetime at the Silkwood Inn. During her lifetime, she learned to read, write, and "do sums." If Brazilla had never seen her that day, it is likely she would have become one of those who died on the Trail of Tears.

The Silkwood Inn was called "The Halfway House" because of its location on the Shawneetown-Kaskaskia trail and did serve as an inn until Brazilla began to take in orphans to raise as his own children. Around the area today, many descendants of the children Brazilla Silkwood took in live on the land he gave to them, and the hollyhocks, called "Priscilla's Hollyhocks," still bloom in front of the Silkwood Inn. [From Chloe Davis and Henderson Ruby, *Mulkeyown Memories*; Chloe Davis and Henderson Ruby, *The Silkwood Inn*; Turner Publishing, *Franklin County, Illinois*; Joseph F. Jurich, "The Silkwood Inn," *This Is Franklin County*, (Aug. 1955); Maurice Metzger, "The Tragic Cherokee Trail of Tears," *Illinois Magazine*, (Nov, 1975); Scerial Thompson, "Land of Egypt," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, (Oct. 1955).]

Beverly Hills

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Beverly Hills is a neighborhood on the southwest side of Chicago. Its neighboring neighborhood is Morgan Park. Beverly Hills was once called Blue Island Ridge. In the words of a local historian, "this prehistoric glacial ridge, which rises nearly 100 feet above the current level of Lake Michigan provides a spectacular setting for neighborhood homes."

In 1822 the Canadian Fur Trader named Joseph Bailly came to the area now called Beverly. The only settlement located in the area was a Potawatomi Indian village. A couple of years after Bailly's arrival, settlers started building rude log cabins. Next, settlers started building wooden farmhouses and planted fields of corn and wheat. The area was not officially owned by anyone until John Blackstone bought three thousand acres from the United States government in 1839. In 1844 John Blackstone sold most of his property which included his mansion and the property surrounding it to Thomas Morgan. Thomas Morgan owned the land known as the Blue Island Ridge; his land spanned 91st street to 119th street. In 1852 the Rock Island Railroad was built into the area of the Blue Island Ridge. This made investors very interested in the area. In 1867 a group of investors purchased the area from the Morgan family. The investors also purchased other lands in the area. The investors combined all the areas and named this suburb Washington Heights.

In 1884 the area known as Washington Heights was divided. One part of the area was named Beverly Hills. In 1890 the Beverly Hills obtained water and sewage service. Later that year Beverly Hills was voted into the city. This area was known as suburban

living in the city. Between 1910 and 1930 building boomed in Beverly. The railway made it easily accessible to other places. The area was a New England Protestant community until 1924 when Saint Barnabas Catholic Church was built. St. Barnabas became the first Catholic Parish in Beverly Hills. The Beverly area attracted large families because the houses that were being built were spacious and could accommodate large families. Soon, more and more Catholics moved into the area. In 1972 African American families started moving into the Beverly area. At first the neighbors were trying not sell their homes to African Americans but soon that changed. Also in 1972 the Beverly Area Planning Association (BAPA) was reorganized. BAPA is a strong neighborhood organization made up of community leaders and local civic groups to keep watch over the neighborhood. In 1972, with the integration of African Americans into the Beverly area some of the residents tried to leave, BAPA urged residents not to move out of the neighborhood and not many did. More and more families, African American and others continued to move into the Beverly neighborhood.

Today the Beverly neighborhood is a beautiful neighborhood with lots of trees, beautiful homes and unique historical properties. The Beverly neighborhood is different from other neighborhoods in the city. The hills in Beverly make this neighborhood unique compared to other neighborhoods. Beverly has eighty-five percent houses compared to other neighborhoods which have quite a few apartment buildings in them. Also Beverly has a wide variety of the types of houses found throughout the neighborhood. Many famous designers have houses they have designed in Beverly: Frank Lloyd Wright, George Washington Maher, Howard Van Doren Shaw and Walter Burley Griffin. Beverly is a racially diverse community. These are just a few reasons why Beverly is such a unique community.

The Beverly Community has historically attracted large families to the area because of the big houses and suburban style living right in the inner city. Also, Beverly has four public grammar schools located in the area all which score well on school report cards. There are about seventeen different churches and eight Chicago Park District Facilities. There are a number of extra curricular activities in which families participate. There are also nice restaurants and near by shopping. [From Ellen Skerrett, *Chicago*; student historian's interview with Harold Wolff, (Beverly Hills resident), Jan. 12, 2003.]